AFRICOM'S DILEMMA:
THE "GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM," "CAPACITY BUILDING," HUMANITARIANISM, AND THE FUTURE OF U.S. SECURITY POLICY IN AFRICA

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FOREWORD

Africa is a continent of growing economic, social, political, and geostrategic importance. It is also a continent of overwhelming poverty, rampant disease, chronic instability, and terrorist activity. The establishment of a new Combatant Command for Africa—AFRICOM—marks an important milestone in the evolution of relations between the United States and the governments of Africa. Through AFRICOM, the U.S. Department of Defense will consolidate the efforts of three existing command headquarters as it seeks a more stable environment for political and economic growth in Africa. In line with this goal, AFRICOM is pioneering a bold new method of military engagement focused on war prevention, interagency cooperation, and development rather than on traditional warfighting.

In this monograph, Robert Berschinski contends that in order to significantly benefit the African security landscape, AFRICOM must depart from the model of U.S. military operations on the continent since September 11, 2001. Using case studies, he argues that by amalgamating threats, overemphasizing "hard" counter-terrorism initiatives, and intertwining military opera-tions with humanitarianism, AFRICOM's predecessors have harmed U.S. strategic interests. In line with this conclusion, he offers policy recommendations to maximize AFRICOM's potential for future success.

The Strategic Studies Institute is pleased to offer this study as part of the ongoing debate over how the U.S. military can best contribute to the mission of shaping the security environment.

DOUGLAS C. LOVELACE, JR.
Director
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ROBERT G. BERSCHINSKI is currently a graduate student in International Relations, concentrating on U.S. security policy at Yale University. Prior to his return to academia, Mr. Berschinski served as an intelligence officer in the U.S. Air Force. He is a veteran of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, where he served as a targeting analyst for a Joint Special Operations Task Force in Al Anbar province. As intelligence flight commander of the 86th Contingency Response Group, Ramstein Air Base, Germany, Mr. Berschinski led antiterrorism and force-protection intelligence analysis for U.S. Air Forces in Europe's premier contingency airfield operations unit responsible for Europe and Africa. He worked in Kigali, Rwanda, as the Air Force's chief of deployed intelligence for North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Operation AFRICAN UNION MISSION IN SUDAN II (AMIS II), and provided reach-back support to European Command's 2005 Operation FLINTLOCK. Mr. Berschinski has published works in the *Yale Journal of International Affairs*, *The Politic*, and *The Encyclopedia of the Cold War*, and has served as a panelist on the U.S. strategic perspective in Africa at the U.S. Army War College. He holds a B.A. in Political Science from Yale University.

SUMMARY

The February 2007 decision to launch a new Department of Defense Unified Combatant Command for Africa (AFRICOM) has already been met with significant controversy both in the United States and abroad. AFRICOM's proponents claim that the new command accurately reflects Africa's growing strategic importance and an enlightened U.S. foreign policy focused on supporting "African solutions to African problems." Its critics allege that the command demonstrates a self-serving American policy focused on fighting terrorism, securing the Africa's burgeoning energy stocks, and countering Chinese influence.

To overcome such misgivings, AFRICOM must demonstrate a commitment to programs mutually beneficial to both African and American national interests. Yet a shrewd strategic communication campaign will not be enough to convince a skeptical African public that AFRICOM's priorities mirror their own. Indeed, much African distrust is justified. Since September 11, 2001 (9/11), the Department of Defense's (DoD) most significant endeavors in Africa have been undertaken in pursuit of narrowly conceived goals related to the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). Operations in North and East Africa, though couched in a larger framework of development, long-term counterinsurgency, and a campaign to win "hearts and minds," have nonetheless relied on offensive military operations focused on short-term objectives.

Though often tactically successful, these efforts—against Algerian insurgents in North Africa and an assortment of Islamists in Somalia—have neither benefited American security interests nor stabilized events in their respective regions. This failure is ascribable in part to the flawed assumptions on

which the GWOT in Africa has rested. American counterterrorism initiatives in Africa since 9/11 have been based on a policy of "aggregation," in which localized and disparate insurgencies have been amalgamated into a frightening, but artificially monolithic whole. Misdirected analyses regarding Africa's sizable Muslim population, its overwhelming poverty, and its numerous ungoverned spaces and failed states further contribute to a distorted picture of the terrorist threat emanating from the continent. The result has been a series of high-profile, marginally valuable kinetic strikes on suspected terrorists; affiliation with proxy forces inimical to stated U.S. policy goals; and the corrosion of African support for many truly valuable and well-intentioned U.S. endeavors.

Because of its pioneering incorporation of security, development, and humanitarian functions into one organization, AFRICOM may be particularly susceptible to criticism if its sporadic "hard" operations overshadow its "softer" initiatives. This concern is not merely academic: If AFRICOM is seen as camouflaging militarism in the guise of humanitarianism, even non-DoD American efforts in Africa are likely to suffer a loss of legitimacy and effectiveness. It follows that, in order to be successful, AFRICOM must divorce itself from the model of U.S. military engagement in Africa since 9/11. As AFRICOM becomes fully operational by the end of 2008, its planners should recognize that saying the command is focused on African priorities will not be enough. Rather, AFRICOM must demonstrate its commitment to a long-term security relationship on African terms. In this regard, the attention and resources garnered by an American flag officer and full-time staff can certainly benefit a continent heretofore largely ignored.

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INTRODUCTION

On February 6, 2007, President George W. Bush formally announced his decision to create a Unified Combatant Command for Africa—U.S. Africa Command, or AFRICOM. The nascent command's spokesmen tout AFRICOM as an important leap in interagency coordination, bridging the divide between the Department of Defense (DoD) and other U.S. Government agencies. DoD also praises AFRICOM as a groundbreaking attempt at conflict prevention, achieved through security cooperation, civil-military initiatives, and humanitarian projects. AFRICOM, it is hoped, will pioneer a new model of U.S. military engagement abroad—mindful of the complicated, interconnected relationships among security, governance, and development.[1]

AFRICOM will not be fashioned entirely from scratch, however. The newest Combatant Command (COCOM) will inherit a series of missions initiated by its predecessors. Two of the most significant—Operation ENDURING FREEDOM–Trans Sahara (OEF-TS) and the Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA)—carry a mandate directly linked to the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). Since their inception, these initiatives have placed U.S. counterterrorism efforts in a larger framework of development, long-term counterinsurgency, and a campaign to win "hearts

and minds." They have also conducted kinetic military operations focused on short-term objectives in their respective areas of responsibility (AORs).[2]

Though often tactically successful, these efforts—against Algerian insurgents in North Africa and an assortment of Islamists in Somalia—have neither benefited larger American security interests nor stabilized events in their respective regions. This failure is ascribable in part to the flawed assumptions on which the GWOT in Africa has rested. American counterterrorism initiatives in Africa since September 11, 2001 (9/11), have been based on a policy of "aggregation," in which localized and disparate insurgencies have been amalgamated into a frightening, but artificially monolithic whole. Misdirected analyses regarding Africa's sizable Muslim population, its overwhelming poverty, and its numerous ungoverned spaces and failed states further contribute to a distorted picture of the terrorist threat emanating from the continent. The result has been a series of high-profile, marginally valuable kinetic strikes on suspected terrorists; affiliation with proxy forces inimical to stated U.S. policy goals; and the corrosion of African support for many truly valuable and well-intentioned U.S. endeavors.

Because of its incorporation of security, development, and humanitarian functions into one organization, AFRICOM may be particularly susceptible to strategic failure if it uncritically incorporates the operational concepts that have guided its predecessors. If AFRICOM is seen as camouflaging militarism in the guise of humanitarianism, even non-DoD American efforts in Africa are likely to suffer a loss of legitimacy and effectiveness. It follows that, in order to be successful, AFRICOM must divorce itself from the model of recent U.S. military engagement in Africa.

This monograph examines DoD efforts in Africa since 9/11 in the context of case studies from North and East Africa. It addresses several of the assumptions on which such operations have been based. Is Africa's population predisposed toward transnational Islamist terrorism? How have the continent's localized insurgencies benefited from their affiliation with global terrorist groups like al-Qaeda? How has this affiliation been supported by an American policy of "aggregation" in the GWOT? How do Africa's ungoverned spaces and failed states factor into a successful counterterrorism strategy? How do current U.S. policies encourage distortion and cooption by oppressive African governments? The answers to these questions suggest that long-term U.S. interests will suffer from a militarized U.S. foreign policy in Africa. AFRICOM's planners have been careful to verbally distance themselves from these charges. Its supporters indicate that African reticence can be overcome through improved "strategic communication," public diplomacy, and a commitment to security cooperation.[3] While important, no amount of "messaging" will triumph over the power of American actions on the continent. As long as DoD policies embed kinetic responses to terrorism in a wider language of humanitarianism, many African states will remain wary of U.S. intentions, with detrimental effects for both parties.

This is not to imply that transnational terrorists do not operate in Africa. Much to the contrary, the author will argue that by aggregating localized threats, U.S. counterterrorism policies in Africa have thus far backfired, encouraging the very extremist inroads they sought to deny. Nor does he imply that kinetic means are employed on a frequent basis. Such assertions are

beside the point: Because of the mismatch in African and American security priorities, kinetic U.S. military counterterrorism activities, however infrequent, come with overwhelming costs vis-à-vis larger U.S. interests.

Background.

AFRICOM's birth underscores a recent, significant change in U.S. policy toward Africa. Despite conducting at least 20 military operations in Africa during the 1990s, in mid-decade DoD planners maintained that the United States had "very little traditional strategic interest in Africa."[4] In 1998, President Bill Clinton's National Security Strategy of the United States listed Africa last in its inventory of "Integrated Regional Approaches" to U.S. security.[5] During the 2000 presidential campaign, candidate George W. Bush noted that "while Africa may be important, it doesn't fit into [American] national strategic interests, as far as I can see them."[6] As one respected analyst noted at the time, U.S. relations with Africa at the turn of the 21st century seemed to mirror those of the 20th: marginalized at best.[7]

Since 2001, however, Africa has steadily gained strategic importance in the eyes of American policymakers. Africa recently surpassed the Middle East as the largest U.S. regional supplier of crude oil.[8] Nigeria, the continent's largest oil exporter, now ranks as America's fifth leading supplier, while Angola and Algeria rank sixth and seventh.[9] The continent's oil production is expected to rise in coming years: Ghana's president has declared his country "an African tiger" on the strength of its recent oil discoveries; Sierra Leone's president has hinted that his country too

may hold rich deposits.[10] These new discoveries and an American desire to wean itself from Middle East suppliers are reflected in recent figures: the United States imported 22 percent of its crude oil from African states in 2006, rising from 15 percent 2 years prior.[11] A Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) report projects that this share will rise to 25 percent by 2015.[12]

The United States is not the only country to take note of Africa's increasing energy stores. With an economy growing at roughly 9 percent per year, China is looking to Africa to sate its precipitously rising oil requirements. China currently imports nearly a third of its crude oil from African sources, and President Hu Jintao has made a recent priority of courting African leaders.[13] China has cancelled over $10 billion of debt for 31 African states since 2000, and has overtaken the World Bank in terms of overall lending to the continent.[14] As both the United States and China vie for Africa's expanding oil resources, several analysts have noted Africa's emergence as a theater for strategic competition.[15]

AFRICOM also reflects a post-9/11 response to perceived security threats emanating from the continent. Foremost in many American minds is Africa's potential as a haven for international terrorist organizations. Extreme poverty, ethno-religious divisions, corrupt and weak governance, failed states, and large tracts of "ungoverned space" combine to offer what many experts believe to be fertile breeding grounds for transnational Islamist terror.[16]

Reflecting both the terrorism threat and desired stability in Africa's energy-producing states, DoD is designing AFRICOM around a linkage between humanitarianism and U.S. strategic interests. Remove the precursors to internal strife and humanitarian

disaster, so the thinking goes, and you also eliminate threats to U.S. security. In an era in which small groups of malcontents can pose a greater threat to U.S. security than a conventionally armed state, "winning hearts and minds" is no longer a worthwhile by-product of philanthropic activity. Instead, it is a strategic imperative in its own right.

Promises and Reservations.

Accordingly, DoD planners are organizing AFRICOM along highly nontraditional lines. The Pentagon is designing AFRICOM to build both indigenous African security capacities and U.S. interagency collaboration, and is abandoning the "J-code" warplanning organizational structure traditionally associated with combatant command (COCOM) staffs.[17] Judging from its press releases, AFRICOM will rarely take the lead in U.S. Government endeavors in Africa. Instead, "support" is the watch-word of the day. DoD will "not look for AFRICOM to take a leadership role; rather, it will be one in support of efforts of leading [African] countries."[18] The military bases and permanently assigned combat units that typify other COCOMs are out; advisors that help "Africans deal with African problems" are in.[19] Internally, AFRICOM is billed as a DoD effort to "support . . . activities that the rest of the U.S. Government is doing [in Africa]."[20] To emphasize this approach, one of AFRICOM's two deputies will be a senior Foreign Service officer designated the Deputy to the Commander for Civil-Military Affairs (DCMA).[21] The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) will contribute a Senior Development Advisor (SDA) to council AFRICOM's commander on

development-related issues; other U.S. Government departments and agencies are also expected to provide high-profile representation within the command.[22]

AFRICOM's stated emphasis on development and war-prevention in lieu of warfighting has won the command widespread praise within the United States. Commentators at organizations as disparate as *The New York Times* and the Heritage Foundation have lauded the new command's focus on African security and stability.[23] Indeed, there can be little doubt that AFRICOM will improve DoD's African coverage. Currently, the continent is divided among three COCOMs. European Command manages the 42 states of western, central, and southern Africa, while Central Command responds to the 7 countries in the Horn region, and Pacific Command covers the island nations off the continent's eastern coast. Africa has largely remained an afterthought for each of these commands, and security experts have long worried about policy discontinuities between their coverage "seams." AFRICOM's promise of a full-time military staff concentrating on African security affairs will, it is hoped, eliminate seams, reduce bureaucratic overlap, and serve to generate proactive policies focused on conflict prevention.

Yet for all its advantages and stated intentions, AFRICOM is being met with less than euphoria in many African states. Recent headlines originating in the African press tell the tale:

> "A Scramble for the Continent We May Not Gain From"; "New U.S. Command Will Militarise Ties with Africa"; "World's Biggest Military Comes to Town"; "SADC Shuns Spectre of U.S. Africom Plans"; "AFRICOM: Wrong for Liberia, Disastrous for Africa."[24]

Pointing to Iraq, Africans worry that AFRICOM signals the export of a militarized U.S. foreign policy. They fear the reintroduction of Cold War-era arms sales and U.S. support for repressive regimes. Citing hundreds of years of colonial subjugation, they accuse the United States of neo-imperialism and resource exploitation. And far from alleviating the continent's insecurity, they fear that AFRICOM will incite, not preclude, terrorist attacks.[25]

Though AFRICOM has supporters among African heads of state, its generally chilly reception has forced U.S. military planners to emphasize and reiterate the command's benevolent intentions and nonmilitary character.[26] Public pronouncements from top officials are as likely to mention humanitarian assistance and disaster relief as they are to refer to counterterrorism and energy security.[27] As Principal Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Ryan Henry has noted:

> We don't see a change in the military's force structure. The mixture of that [sic] forces, again, would be heavily biased to nonkinetic sort of capability—the humanitarian assistance, the civil affairs, the working with the host nations to build up their militaries, working with them to let them know the role of the military in civil society, concepts of civilian control.[28]

AFRICOM's interagency structure is rightly hailed as a more effective means of achieving a collaborative and coherent U.S. policy toward Africa.[29] Yet frequently, and in contrast to the command's draft mission statement, intra-U.S. Government synergy is often portrayed as the command's overriding goal, with AFRICOM described as little more than a paper-based reorganization of current U.S. Government endeavors. As Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense

Theresa Whelan has remarked:

> Our primary objective is, in addition to making the U.S. Department of Defense organizational structure more efficient and effective by having one command . . . we also want to try to integrate better with our counterparts in the U.S. Government.[30]

Government officials are, in effect, promising a kinder, gentler COCOM focused on a radically new mission and tempered by outside influence. If DoD programs in Africa since 9/11 are any indication, however, AFRICOM may not begin life as biased against hard power as its founders intend and Africans desire. Instead, it will likely model itself on the two most significant ongoing DoD efforts in Africa: OEF-TS and CJTF-HOA.

Both OEF-TS and CJTF-HOA encompass a diverse set of missions, including humanitarian and security cooperation functions. Yet each exists primarily to combat Islamist extremism in its respective region under the GWOT. OEF-TS extends initiatives begun in 2002 under the auspices of the Pan-Sahel Initiative (PSI). The PSI sought to enhance regional cooperation with the Sahel nations of Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Chad to combat terrorism, track the movements of people through the Sahel and Sahara, and protect the region's borders.[31] As the lead government agency in charge of counterterrorism, the State Department directed PSI, but leaned heavily on foreign internal defense training provided by Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR).[32] Rechristened in 2005 as the Trans-Sahara Counter Terrorism Program (TSCTP), PSI expanded to include Algeria, Morocco, Senegal, Nigeria, and Tunisia. OEF-TS emerged as TSCTP's SOCEUR-led military arm. OEF-TS conducts "military-to-military

engagements and exercises designed to strengthen the ability of regional governments to police the large expanses of remote terrain in the trans-Sahara."[33] Though focused primarily on this training mission, SOCEUR forces are widely reported to have taken part in offensive operations.[34]

Half a continent away, CENTCOM established CJTF-HOA in 2002 to "detect, disrupt, and ultimately defeat transnational terrorist groups" operating in Africa's northeastern Horn region (Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Yemen on the Arabian peninsula).[35] DoD predicated CJTF-HOA on the belief that al-Qaeda members flowing out of Afghanistan following the U.S.-led invasion would likely flee to the Horn. When the expected terrorist concentrations failed to materialize, the Task Force transitioned to training regional security forces, supporting humanitarian missions, and conducting civil-military operations.[36] CJTF-HOA prides itself on a nonkinetic, long-term approach to counterterrorism in East Africa.[37] Accurately or not, however, the Task Force is better known for its links to the U.S. special operations forces (SOF)-supported Ethiopian invasion of Somalia in late 2006.[38]

Notwithstanding localized successes and short-term gains, the problem with an AFRICOM based on the OEF-TS and CJTF-HOA models is that African security is simply not tied to GWOT-framed policies. Scholars familiar with the African security landscape continually argue that African leaders do not regard transnational Islamist terrorism with anything approaching the urgency of the United States. This position is not one of ignorance; rather, it reflects the reality of Africa's true security priorities: hunger, disease, internecine warfare, oppressive regimes, and crushing poverty.

Despite these fundamental disparities, DoD support for OEF-TS and CJTF-HOA has grown since their respective inceptions. Both are frequently cited as model programs on which AFRICOM should build.[39] And OEF-TS and CJTF-HOA have achieved victories: each has been successful in denying territory and freedom of action to various Islamist terrorists for short periods of time. Yet both OEF-TS and CJTF-HOA exhibit the inner contradiction inherent in a GWOT-centric military policy in Africa. Though both have established notable civil-military and indigenous "capacity building" operations, both are inextricably linked to elements of "hard" U.S. power. This power is not without its legitimate and justifiable uses, but it is nevertheless a far cry from the aims stated by U.S. officials. If extended to AFRICOM, this contradiction will become more pronounced. Multilateralism, a respect for African regional security organizations, a commitment to remaining in a supporting role, and other AFRICOM talking points—however well-intentioned—will appear only more duplicitous to the same African audience they are intended to win over.

This contradiction would be more palatable if kinetic counterterrorism operations in North and East Africa showed signs of curtailing militant Islamism in the long term. Unfortunately, they do not. And yet, by highlighting the wide gulf between U.S. rhetoric and action, these operations threaten to engender further resentment toward the United States, especially among Africa's sizeable Muslim population. In the long run, such actions will harm, not further, American interests on the continent.

AGGREGATION AND DISAGGREGATION

The U.S. GWOT-oriented policies in Africa have helped to exacerbate, not reduce, the long-term transnational terrorist threat emanating from the continent. This outcome can largely be attributed to a U.S. policy of "aggregation," defined as the amalgamation of local and regional African insurgent groups into a monolithic enemy. This process has benefited from overly simplistic assumptions concerning Africa as the next front in the war on terrorism. Worst-case scenarios have often trumped more moderate assessments of illicit activity and localized insurgency. Oversimplified perspectives and an overemphasis on hard power have heightened long-standing ethnic tensions and resulted in clientelism and unviable military interventions. In order to reverse the trend towards aggregation in Africa, this monograph recommends a strategy of "disaggregation," as modeled on the work of David Kilcullen.

Kilcullen, an Australian social scientist, published a paper entitled "Countering Global Insurgency,"[40] around the same time in 2005 that he took the post of Chief Strategist in the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism at the State Department. In the article, Kilcullen outlines a comprehensive reevaluation of U.S. policy as it relates to the GWOT. In fact, though he accepts the misnomer "Global War on Terrorism" as a *de facto* political reality, Kilcullen advocates a complete paradigm shift in how the United States wages its struggle against militant Islamists.

Kilcullen begins by noting that the worldwide jihadi campaign is "a diverse confederation of movements that uses terrorism as its principal, but not its sole tactic."[41]

The jihad is waged by Islamist groups in separate theaters around the world, connected through a variety of religious, cultural, ideological, linguistic, familial, financial, and historical links.[42] Operationally, the jihad is waged at three levels: local, regional, and global. The lowest level consists of local terrorists and insurgents—isolated groups that carry out the vast majority of attacks. Importantly, the struggles of many of these groups—such as Islamic guerrillas in the Caucasus and Moro separatists in the Philippines—both predate the worldwide jihad and are predicated on essentially nonpan-Islamic goals.[43]

At the top of the worldwide jihad sits al-Qaeda. The group itself does not act as a "higher headquarters" for local-level insurgents, but does provide ideological guidance and propaganda. Instead, due largely to the globalizing tools of modern communications and media, al-Qaeda relates to localized groups through a class of regional intermediaries. These theater-level affiliates often co-opt, exploit, and redefine local grievances in pan-Islamic, jihadi terms.[44]

Taken together, the worldwide jihad should be seen as a global insurgency, defined as "a popular movement that seeks to overthrow the status quo through subversion, political activity, insurrection, armed conflict and terrorism."[45] Al-Qaeda uses terrorism as one tool in its wider inventory of insurgency tactics. More fundamentally, however, it "feed[s] on local grievances, integrate[s] them into broader ideologies, and link[s] disparate conflicts through globalized communications, finances, and technology."[46]

This reconceptualization of terrorism and its relationship to insurgency leads to conclusions at odds with current policies in the GWOT. Instead of treating terrorists as illegal combatants or criminals inherently

differentiated from the rest of humanity, Kilcullen suggests regarding insurgents "as representative of deeper issues or grievances within society."[47] As a first order of business in global counterinsurgency, the West must regard the insurgents' grievances as legitimate, though pursued via illegitimate means. Redressing grievances will require "compromise and negotiation" as the counterinsurgent seeks to win the hearts and minds of the larger population supportive of global jihad. While violent insurgent methods will continue to be denounced as unacceptable, peaceful methods should be met with good-faith conciliation. While die-hard militants may require conventional counterterrorism work (law enforcement, intelligence, military), the true heavy lifting of the global counterinsurgency strategy is achieved through "pacification, winning hearts and minds, and the denial of sanctuary and external sponsorship."[48]

In defining current U.S. strategy in the War on Terrorism, Kilcullen identifies a policy of "aggregation," which he defines as the "lumping together [of] all terrorism, all rogue or failed states and all strategic competitors."[49] He endorses the prescient analysis of the Air War College's Jeffrey Record, who in 2003 published a monograph noting that the U.S. Government's "conflation of al-Qaeda and Saddam Hussein's Iraq as a single, undifferentiated terrorist threat . . . was a strategic error of the first order."[50] Apart from Iraq, Record criticized a GWOT comprising "a multiplicity of enemies, including rogue states; weapons of mass destruction proliferators; terrorist organizations of global, regional, and national scope; and terrorism itself," amalgamating these distinct entities into "a [falsely] monolithic threat." Such a policy was "unrealistic and condemn[ed] the United States to a hopeless quest for absolute security."[51]

In Kilcullen's analysis, what he calls "aggregation" and Record labels "conflation" work directly into the hands of the global insurgency. The genius of bin Laden and other global-level jihadis has been to fuse dozens of essentially dissimilar, localized conflicts and attacks under the banner of pan-Islamism. This quest has been helped immensely by a U.S. policy that essentially seeks to broadcast the same message.

In place of the GWOT's existing policy of "aggregation," Kilcullen advocates a fundamentally antithetical one that he reasonably entitles "disaggregation." The core elements of the strategy of disaggregation "break the links that allow the jihad to function as a global entity."[52] Local and regional insurgencies are evaluated for their specific ties to the global jihad, and these precise links are then neutralized. As with the Pacific island-hopping campaign during World War II, local insurgencies that bear little or no relationship to the global jihad can be set aside. Key global-level insurgent leaders are cut off from regional and local actors. All the while, the grievances implicit in populations supporting local insurgencies are ameliorated through a radical new calculus of effort: 80 percent political, diplomatic, developmental, and informational; and 20 percent military.[53]

Kilcullen draws parallels between disaggregation and George Kennan's Cold War-era strategy of containment. Like containment, disaggregation assumes a long-term struggle involving all facets of U.S. power. Like containment, disaggregation is based on an in-depth assessment of the enemy's internal thought processes and ideology. And, as with Kennan's original formulation of containment, disaggregation urges a predominantly nonmilitary approach in response to the enemy threat. Yet, as Kennan discovered soon

after publishing his famous *Foreign Affairs* "X Article" in 1947, strategy at the implementation phase is open to a broad range of interpretations. As the Marshall Plan transitioned into the arms race, Kennan spent a career criticizing what he saw as the militarization of his initial approach.

As will be shown in the case studies, the same calculations that led to a militarization of containment have thus far guided U.S. policy in the GWOT, and, more specifically, counterterrorism programs in Africa such as OEF-TS and CJTF-HOA. Measured in day-to-day terms, these efforts adhere to a Kilcullen-like framework of favoring nonkinetic means. Nevertheless, they remain military programs focused first and foremost on eliminating local terrorists in their respective areas of responsibility (AOR). When longer-term counterinsurgency work threatens this mission, recent U.S. actions in Africa have proven that immediate returns prevail over long-term strategy. Given AFRICOM's interagency structure and blurring of civilian and military mandates, the continuation of this policy under the new command will likely incur significant strategic costs in terms of the effort to win "hearts and minds."

TRANSNATIONAL ISLAMIST TERRORISM AND AFRICA

Transnational terrorist groups are active on the African continent. Despite successful U.S. and Ethiopian military strikes against Somalia's Council of Islamic Courts in late 2006 and early 2007, known al-Qaeda operatives continue to function in that country and elsewhere in East Africa.[54] Nigeria, both Africa's most populous nation and home to the largest Muslim

population in AFRICOM's area of responsibility (AOR), faces challenges ranging from radical Islamists in its northern states to tensions in its oil-saturated southeast.[55] Al-Qaeda-affiliated groups are reported to be making preliminary inroads in South Africa.[56] Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), formerly the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), has recently adopted al-Qaeda-like tactics in Algeria and enlarged its area of operations to include large swaths of the Sahara Desert and Sahel regions.[57]

These events are not limited to recent years. In August 1998, an al-Qaeda-affiliated group bombed the U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, killing 224 people and injuring an additional 5,000.[58] Four years later, the same group killed 16 in a bombing in Mombasa, Kenya, and came close to downing an Israeli airliner with a shoulder-fired surface-to-air missile. In 2003, internationally-linked Moroccan terrorists unleashed five near-simultaneous suicide attacks in Casablanca, killing 43.[59] Despite arresting some 2,000 suspected militants in the wake of that attack, suicide bombings in Casablanca in early 2007 underscore militant Islam's continued operational capacity in the region.[60]

This litany of terrorist activities in Africa indicates the presence of local, regional, and worldwide actors comprising the global insurgency. Yet a laundry list of events and potential hot spots does little to differentiate between localized populations, their grievances, and the insurgencies that purport to act in their name. Instead, it aggregates groups and grievances. This tendency in turn strengthens the claim that Africa's various problems—both natural and man-made—provide a fertile breeding group for militant pan-Islamism. A basic survey of Africa's demographics and manifold

problems seems to support such a vision, leading inexorably toward claims of Africa as the GWOT's "new front." Many analysts cannot help but connect Africa's poverty, large Muslim population, and frequently weak governmental structures to transnational terror. However, such oversimplifications do little to address the continent's more pressing concerns, and lead to policy outcomes of negligible worth.

Religion.

The 2006 *National Security Strategy of the United States* states that "the War on Terror is a battle of ideas, it is not a battle of religions." It goes on to say that "the transnational terrorists confronting us today exploit the proud religion of Islam to serve a violent political vision."[61] Both statements are fundamentally correct to differentiate between Islam and the militant jihadism advocated by leaders of the global insurgency. Even when cognizant of this crucial difference, however, analyses of the African security landscape are overly prone to amalgamate otherwise distinct religious trends.

The 52 states comprising AFRICOM's proposed AOR represent almost 3,000 culturally distinct groups, over 2,000 different languages, and often commingled Christian, Muslim, and animist populations.[62] Approximately one-third of Africans practice some form of Islam, and the faith is the dominant form of religion north of the 10th parallel—a line running from Guinea in the west through northern Nigeria, southern Chad and Sudan, and extending to the Somali coast.

For all of the troubling signs of Islamist-inspired terror in Africa, it is important to keep in mind that not all forms of Islam—even of the fundamentalist

variety—are cut from the same cloth. The majority of African Muslims adhere to the moderate Maliki and Shafi'i legal traditions and Sufi branch of Sunni Islam, while only a small minority practice the Hanbali jurisprudence linked with Wahhabism and Salafism.[63] Field work continues to indicate that African Muslims are overwhelming moderate, stress religious pluralism, and integrate traditional African religious practices into their faith.[64] Such trends hold even in areas of specific concern to the War on Terror, such as the Sahel and Horn regions.

The exceptions to this religious trend rightfully garner the majority of both press coverage and U.S. counterterrorism attention in Africa. Militant and political forms of Islam are present in Nigeria, South Africa, and Sudan, as well as in the Maghreb, Sahel, and Horn regions. Increasingly, these strains of Islam are driven by Islamic nongovernment organizations (NGOs) financed by Pakistan and the Persian Gulf states, particularly Saudi Arabia.[65] Exploiting a demand for social services not provided through governmental channels, as well as popular discontent with the war in Iraq and other American policies, radical Islamic charities have in recent decades made inroads in several areas of the continent.[66]

Differentiating between NGOs and clerics espousing militant pan-Islamism and similar actors preaching benign forms of fundamentalist Islam is a difficult endeavor. The presence of Tablighi Jama'at in Africa highlights this dilemma. Tablighi Jama'at is the world's largest Muslim missionary society. The group focuses on missionary work and personal spiritual renewal, while adamantly disavowing political involvement and violence. It has, according to one former CIA analyst, "no distinct ideological message

or intellectual content beyond the propagation and purification of Islamic teaching and the betterment of Muslims."[67] Nevertheless, Tablighi inroads into Africa in recent years have been seen by some as indicating the region's growing radicalization. Such fears are at best over dramatized. As with many large religious organizations, individual members of Tablighi Jama'at have traded in extreme ideology. Yet the group as a whole should be engaged as an alternative to global insurgency, not aggregated into it. As a terrorism expert testified to the 9/11 Commission in 2003, "Not all Muslim fundamentalists are the same. Just as European socialists acted as a bulwark against Soviet communism in the last century, peaceful fundamentalist groups such as the Tablighi Jama'at may help to promote a peaceful message and repudiate terrorist violence."[68]

Making such informed acts of disaggregation are critical, and must be carried out by experts familiar with local conditions. A recent partnership in Burkina Faso between the U.S. Embassy and the aid organization, Islamic Relief, underscores the benefits of such differentiation. By partnering with an Islamic NGO to deliver much needed medical supplies, the United States in this instance not only decreased conditions for insurgent exploitation, but also bolstered the efforts of a moderate Islamic charity.[69] Unfortunately, however, this type of informed decisionmaking requires a level of experience and in-depth acculturation with Africa infrequently found among U.S. Government officials, especially in DoD.

Poverty and Disease.

As with religion, poverty plays a complicated and often misunderstood role vis-à-vis terrorism in Africa. Echoing the *9/11 Commission Report*, the 2006

National Strategy for Combating Terrorism (NSCT) states that "terrorism is not the inevitable by-product of poverty."[70] Both documents go on to note that Osama bin Laden personifies the archetype of a well-educated, middle- or upper-class transnational terrorist. Indeed, that the perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks were neither uneducated nor poor is now a common refrain in both government documents and scholarly works.[71] Though accurate, this oft-repeated anecdote can be misleading. Research has shown that while active perpetrators of terror fit the description set forth in the *9/11 Commission Report* and 2006 NSCT, these elites generally act in the name of their socio-economically disadvantaged population base.[72] As evidenced by the lack of transnational terrorism in most of sub-Saharan Africa, poverty does not inevitably *cause* terrorism.[73] But it does provide a fertile breeding ground for exploitation by groups like al-Qaeda hoping to harness local grievances to pan-Islamic jihad. This pattern holds true for educational opportunity: Individual terrorists may have above-average educational backgrounds, but they often act in the name of, and are supported by, the larger, educationally disadvantaged society around them.[74]

The scale of Africa's poverty is breathtaking. After fairly steady economic growth in the immediate post-colonial era, most African countries underwent a period of stark economic stagnation from the 1970s into the mid-1990s.[75] The colonial legacy, high population growth rates, and government mismanagement have doomed nearly half of Africa's sub-Saharan states to declining standards of living since 1960.[76] Since 2000, however, some economic trends have improved. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Africa experienced 5.5 percent growth

in 2006, a figure expected to rise in coming years.[77] This growth has been driven by a combination of increased oil and other raw material exports, enlarged official development aid from donor countries, and improved macroeconomic policies by African governments.[78]

Despite these recent gains, Africa is still mired in overwhelming poverty. The 2007 World Bank *World Development Indicators* notes that 41 percent of sub-Saharan Africans live on one dollar a day or less, and that even current growth rates will not be enough to achieve the primary Millennium Development Goal of halving extreme poverty by 2015.[79] Nine of the world's ten poorest countries are in Africa.[80] Diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria continue to ravage the continent and inhibit growth. As of 2006, HIV alone infected between 21 and 27 million people in Africa, or about 6.1 percent of the continental population. Numbers are particularly stark in Southern Africa, where 10 different countries have HIV prevalence rates above 10 percent.[81] Deaths from AIDS and other diseases have lowered the life expectancy for the average African to 46 years, depriving the work force of labor and imposing significant secondary economic effects.[82]

Given Africa's poverty woes, why hasn't the continent produced more transnational terrorism? Aside from the cultural and ideological root causes discussed elsewhere in this section, scholars have posited several answers. The first explanation for Africa's relative lack of pan-Islamist terrorism is that Africans are simply too poor and underdeveloped to facilitate effective terrorist networks.[83] Accordingly, most Africans are too busy trying to eke out an existence to tend with political violence against the west. The lack of transportation and communication

capability in Africa's vast rural areas is not conducive to the logistical and operational necessities of modern terrorism. A second explanation posits that it is not poverty alone that promotes affiliation with terrorist groups, but rather economic inequality.[84] Under this rubric, economic development itself—if inequitable—can cause the social unrest on which terrorism feeds. Mounting evidence supports the claim that Africa's newly-emerging oil states are particularly susceptible to this trend.[85]

The third explanation is definitional: Africa has in recent decades suffered from massive bouts of social conflict in which combatants use terrorist tactics. These conflicts, including their terrorist aspects, have simply attracted little American attention.[86] For instance, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a militant Christian group based in northern Uganda and southern Sudan, has waged a 20-year insurgency that has left over two million Ugandans homeless and displaced. The group, which claims to seek to replace Uganda's government with one based on the Ten Commandments, killed or abducted over 20,000 children before agreeing to an uneasy ceasefire in 2006.[87] The LRA alone has killed many times the number of innocent civilians than all al-Qaeda-related attacks in Africa combined. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the largest interstate conflict since World War II claimed over 3 million victims at the turn of the millennium.[88] Many of these died at the hands of genocidal militias and terror-inducing marauders. In Sudan, ongoing fighting between the government-backed Janjaweed and Darfuri rebel forces has cost over 200,000 lives, virtually all of them civilian.[89] These conflicts highlight the challenge of defining who is, and who is not, a terrorist. Similar clashes in the future may benefit from the support to peacekeeping that AFRICOM will be able to deliver to

Africa. None, however, will benefit from a command pursuing an operational concept of aggregation, as the following case studies will show.

CASE STUDY: THE SAHEL, THE GSPC, AND OEF-TS

The Pan Sahel Initiative (PSI) grew out of the post-9/11 idea that areas of limited governmental control serve as natural safehavens for transnational terrorist organizations. As outlined in the 2006 *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, these "ungoverned" or "undergoverned" spaces pose a direct threat to American security as "secure spaces that allow [U.S.] enemies to plan, organize, train, and prepare for operations."[90] As envisioned, the PSI sought to provide the states of the Sahel—possessing some of the largest and poorest undergoverned spaces on the planet—with the training and equipment necessary to more effectively administer the tools of state sovereignty.

The Sahel region first came into the post-9/11 "ungoverned space" limelight in February 2003. Under the leadership of Ammari Saïfi—better known as "El Para" because of his background as a paratrooper in the Algerian army—a faction of the Algerian rebel group, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), kidnapped 31 Europeans touring the Sahara.[91] After fleeing into Mali to evade the Algerians, El Para freed his captives in exchange for a reported €5 million from the German government. Early in 2004, he was located in northern Mali by Algerian forces, and was then chased by U.S.-supported security forces from Mali into Niger, and finally into Chad. Though he escaped, most of his band were killed in a March 2004 battle with Chadian and Nigerien troops supported by

U.S. SOF. He was later captured by members of the Chadian rebel group, Movement for Democracy and Justice (MDJT), and was returned to custody in Algiers by way of N'Djamena and Tripoli.[92]

El Para's undertaking vaulted the GSPC into the upper echelons of U.S. counterterrorism efforts in Northern Africa. Prior to the hostage taking, the GSPC both defined itself and was seen by most outside observers as a domestic Islamist insurgency seeking to topple the Algerian government. In 2002, for example, a Congressional Research Service report entitled "Africa and the War on Terrorism" omitted the GSPC and all of North Africa from its examination of Africa's potential transnational terror breeding grounds. Instead, the report focused on more pressing developments in Sudan, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, and South Africa.[93]

Following El Para's raid, however, the GSPC increasingly came to be seen by U.S. officials as a regional and transcontinental threat. From a post-9/11 mindset, El Para's nomadic behavior and attack on western tourists seemed to reinforce PSI's core philosophical underpinnings: A transnational terrorist group had used the Sahel's ungoverned areas to attack Western interests and evade authorities. Additionally, the area in which he had operated was poor, sparsely populated, and overwhelmingly Muslim. The attack was widely portrayed as the GSPC's emergence as a global actor, and as a wake up call to U.S. forces eager to avoid another Afghanistan. An article written shortly after El Para's capture and printed in *Air Force Magazine* underscored this fear. Entitled "Swamp of Terror in the Sahara," the article asserted that "Africa's sprawling desert is now a magnet for terrorists." It included a map labeled with all of North Africa—an

area larger than the continental United States—as "The New Front in the War on Terrorism." With little more than El Para's kidnapping and reports of North Africans appearing in Iraq to back up such claims, the article certified that "impoverished areas of Africa with large Muslim populations"—in other words, over half the continent—were now "a haven for radical Islamists."[94]

There should be no doubt that El Para's capture was a tactical success. PSI-trained Sahelian troops, with a significant level of U.S. assistance, demonstrated a remarkable level of skill and coordination in tracking the fugitive through the desert. Given the massive resources the United States can bring to bear against Islamist insurgents operating in the Sahel, similar tactical successes should be expected under AFRICOM.

Yet in its post-El Para reaction to the GSPC, the U.S. Government's response to terrorism in North Africa has been a strategic failure. A misunderstanding of the relationship between North Africa's Muslim population and transnational terrorism has oversimplified threats emanating from within the region. Ignorance of local conditions and ethnic fault lines has driven policies destabilizing key states. And most importantly, a misunderstanding of the GSPC's nature has played directly into al-Qaeda's hands by aggregating a local insurgency into the global jihad.

Islam and North Africa.

Inevitably, in-depth studies of the West and North African regions argue that while ethnic fissures and fundamentalist Islam are present in the region, these features are not tantamount to a "welcome mat" for

jihadis.[95] Such detailed ethnographies are difficult to reduce to talking points. They do, however, produce a picture at odds with a key premise of the ungoverned-space thesis as it relates to West Africa—that jihadi groups find a receptive population in which to hide and recruit.[96]

As previously noted, the overwhelming majority of Africa's Muslims are Sufis. Adherents generally subscribe to one of three Sufi brotherhoods, groups that tend to avoid explicit government involvement but wield an indirect influence on political events. Generalizations that African Sufis have been peaceful throughout their history are erroneous. Yet, throughout the Sahel and West Africa, Sufi brotherhoods currently serve a central role in both religious and civil society.[97]

The Sahel is also home to branches of fundamentalist and reformist Islam, but here, too, an authentic picture is complicated by nuance. In addition to the activist Tabligh movement described earlier, Salafi Islam has in past decades made inroads against the historically dominant Sufi orders.[98] Yet even within the Salafiyya, fundamentalism rarely equates with jihadi ideology, just as the overwhelming majority of Christian fundamentalists eschew violence.

Salafis in Africa group into two broad currents: the Salafiyya Ilmiyya and Salafiyya Jihadiyya.[99] The Salafiyya Ilmiyya, or "scholarly Salafis," comprise by far the larger of the two groups. This conservative sect urges obedience to the state, but finds no justification in scripture for political action. It thus requires abstention from political involvement. The movement's rejection of political activism has brought it into conflict with Islamist political groups such as the Muslim Brothers.[100] The Salafiyya Ilmiyya have thus been used to counterbalance Islamist political parties in

many Muslim states, including, at times, Morocco and Algeria.[101] While the spread of Salafiyya Ilmiyya has come as a shock in recent years to various sub-Saharan governments (notably Nigeria), their belief system is more bulwark than bastion vis-à-vis the global jihad.

Only the Salafiyya Jihadiyya, or "fighting Salafis," reject the standing political order and resort to violence in perceived defense of Islam.[102] The political writings of 1960s Egyptian radical Sayyid Qutb play an influential role in this doctrine. Qutb justified an abandonment of the Sunni principle of subservience to the Muslim state, thereby discarding a core tenet of Salafiyya Ilmiyya.[103] Salafiyya Jihadiyya numbers grew significantly in the wake of the successful campaign against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the 1980s. By the 1990s, veterans of the Afghanistan campaign had returned home to Egypt and Algeria, establishing similar insurgencies against their home governments. The origins of the GSPC grew out of this jihad, later to be affiliated with al-Qaeda's globalist ideology.

Analysts taking measure of Islamism in West Africa should bear in mind the distinctions between Salafiyya Ilmiyya and the much rarer Salafiyya Jihadiyya. Yet this task is often difficult to achieve in practice. All too often, explicitly violent and nonviolent Islamist strains are confused and aggregated by observers unfamiliar with local nuances. Instead, many commentators have latched onto the influx of foreign, often Persian Gulf-based, religious NGOs and charities working in the region as evidence of malevolent trends. Such a concern should not be taken lightly. Since 9/11, the United States has succeeded in shutting down several Islamic charities wittingly or unwittingly aiding terrorists in Africa.[104] Fundamentalist mosques and madrassas have grown in number since the 1990s. In dealing

with Islamic charities and missionaries, however, patience, expertise, and careful scrutiny should define U.S. Government activities. Fundamentalism is not synonymous with militancy or transnational terror, and messages to the contrary damage U.S. interests in Africa. Furthermore, a picture of ever-growing Islamist presence in West Africa is far from absolute: recent election results in Mauritania and Senegal suggest that political Islam's influence may actually be declining in the region.[105]

One place where fundamentalism may be growing is Nigeria—home to half of Africa's 140 million Muslims and a critical U.S. energy partner. Saudi-funded proselytizers have initiated a fundamentalist resurgence in the country's Muslim north, threatening an already precarious balance with the Christian south. Yet as cautioned by Africa scholars Princeton Lyman and Stephen Morrison, north-south tension in Nigeria stems as much from the north's economic slide under former president Olusegun Obasanjo as it does from Islamic fundamentalism.[106] The 2000 installation of sharia law in 12 northern Nigerian states—seen as a sure sign of radicalism by many western analysts— was as much a response to crime and corruption as a marker of religious trends. Indeed, as an author writing in *Foreign Affairs* recently pointed out, northern Nigeria has always been subject to some form of civil sharia law, even during British colonial rule.[107] Since its latest incarnation, sharia has become popular in the north as a symbol of hope and morality, while Taliban-style draconian justice has been largely ignored.[108]

Finally, Africa is not adapting to the onrush of Islam in isolation. Christianity, too, is sweeping the continent in what some commentators have labeled "Africa's Great Awakening."[109] Today, 20 percent of

Africans describe themselves as Pentecostal, and by 2025 the continent's Christian population is expected to double to 633 million.[110] In what promises to be an earnest struggle for African souls, long-term U.S. interests will best be served by avoiding perceptions of stoking religious tension.

Local Factors.

The sparsely populated Sahara and its Sahelian borderlands have hosted nomads, rebels, smugglers, criminals, traders, and any combination therein for centuries. The Moors and Tauregs that populate the border areas between Mauritania, Algeria, Mali, and Niger have transited the Sahara with loads of gold, weapons, slaves, and other goods for centuries. Indeed, it was only in the 18th century and with the advent of European-dominated commerce along the coast that the peoples of the Sahel watched their once lucrative trade decline.[111] Today, trade operations are largely illicit. The routes themselves are nicknamed the "Marlboro Road" because of the large number of illegal cigarettes making their way across the Sahara for eventual entry into Europe.[112]

National governments seldom play a hands-on role in the Sahel, but this condition should not be confused with a total lack of control. Instead, central governments and their distant citizenry have established a system of indirect rule, in which various ethnic tribal leaders are coopted to maintain peace and security.[113] Such a policy is in place to ameliorate long-standing ethnic tensions between the southern capitals and their northern citizens. Both Niger and Mali have experienced significant Taureg revolts, and considerable strains exist in both states. As stressed in

2006 by former Ambassador to Mali Robert Pringle, such tensions are "a classic case of conflict between nomads and central authority."[114]

This precarious balance between central authority and the hinterlands is threatened by injudicious U.S. military involvement. To give one example, at the conclusion of the last Malian Taureg uprising in 1995, Bamako incorporated many Taureg into its customs department. Such an arrangement allowed local leaders to profit from duties imposed on both legal and illegal goods. The arrangement mollified the Taureg and kept peace in Mali. Yet as the United States continues to prosecute the war on terrorism against elements of the GSPC in the region, it threatens to disrupt this bargain by shutting down the trade routes. Without providing an alternative means of sustenance, such actions will disrupt the region's economy, and hence its political stability.[115]

The irony is that U.S. efforts to train Sahelian militaries through OEF-TS are often cited as examples of catalyzing "African solutions to African problems." As long as the GWOT remains at the heart of U.S. capacity-building in Africa, however, "African problems" will be selected within predetermined U.S. boundaries. Malians sense that the greatest threat to their democracy rests with unsettling the precarious northern situation. Marauding Algerian terrorists and radical Islam, meanwhile, barely register as a concern.[116] What does register is that U.S. pressure to hunt terrorists will destabilize the Taureg. As Ambassador Pringle has noted, "some Malians are no doubt worried about their ability to apply tough measures [in line with U.S. policies] in a manner that would not aggravate old political grievances."[117] A similar situation is summed up by Kilcullen, who has

noted that "in many cases today, the counterinsurgent represents revolutionary change, while the insurgent fights to preserve the status quo of ungoverned spaces." Referring to Pakistan, Kilcullen points out that "The enemy includes al-Qaeda-linked extremists . . . but also local tribesmen fighting to preserve their traditional culture against 21st century encroachment."[118] Today in the Sahel, al-Qaeda-linked extremists do not yet fight hand-in-hand with the region's nomads. Yet given cause for solidarity, such an outcome is not out of the question.

The GSPC, the Sahel, and al-Qaeda.

According to the 2002 *Patterns of Global Terrorism*, the GSPC's favored *modus operandi* at the time consisted of "false roadblocks and attacks against convoys transporting military, police, or other government personnel."[119] Its ties to the global jihad consisted of "contacts with other North African extremists sympathetic to al Qaida." A RAND analyst assessed that the group struggled to carry on despite significant setbacks due to Algerian security forces and infighting.[120]

Five years later, the GSPC is officially affiliated with al-Qaeda, having changed its name to al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Senior U.S. officials assess the threat emanating from GSPC/AQ merger to be "significant, very dangerous, and growing."[121] GSPC attacks now carry al-Qaeda-like signatures: Recent tactics have included suicide bombings and coordinated, remote-controlled detonations.[122] The group is rumored to have joined forces with like-minded jihadi groups in Morocco, Libya, and Tunisia.[123] Increasingly, GSPC spokesmen refer to their actions in language of the global jihad. In April 2007, a

mouthpiece declared, "We won't rest until every inch of Islamic land is liberated from foreign forces."[124]

There is no simple explanation for this expansion in the GSPC's operational reach and stated intent. Considerable credit for the transformation rests with the global jihad's top leadership. Despite initial GSPC reluctance to associate with al-Qaeda, Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri have successfully integrated the Algerian insurgency into their own rhetoric of a worldwide conflict between Islam and the "crusaders."[125] In an October 2002 letter addressed "To the Americans," bin Laden tied events in Algeria directly to U.S. actions:

> When the Islamic party in Algeria wanted to practice democracy and they won the election, you [the Americans] unleashed your collaborators in the Algerian army on them, and attacked them with tanks and guns, imprisoned them and tortured them—a new lesson from the "American book of democracy."[126]

In closing a July 2006 audio recording, he linked Algeria with other major theaters of the global jihad:

> O Lord, make us and the mujahidin everywhere steadfast, especially in Palestine, Iraq, Kashmir, Chechnya, Afghanistan, Somalia, Algeria, and the land of the two holy mosques. O Lord, guide them toward their targets, make them steadfast, instill courage in their hearts, and provide them with Your aid, and grant them victory over their and Your enemy. They and we have no supporter but You. You have power and can carry out Your will. "Allah hath full power and control over His affairs; but most among mankind know it not."[127]

According to bin Laden, the Algerian civil war of the 1990s was no longer bound within the confines of territory or time. The Algerian government's repressive

tactics were American tactics, "crusader" tactics. The GSPC's resistance was now pan-Islamist resistance, no different from al-Qaeda's other fronts around the world. The two groups officially merged 3 months after the July missive on September 11, 2006. Al-Qaeda's plan of aggregating the once-local insurgency into its globalist agenda had been completely successful.

Al-Qaeda is not the only actor in the GSPC's recent aggrandizement, however. Both the group itself and the U.S. Government (and various European security services) have played significant roles in the GSPC's recent transformation, though for very different reasons.

As with separatists in the Philippines and the Caucasus, the roots of the GSPC reside in nonpan-Islamist grievances. In the midst of economic decline in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Algeria's ruling, secularist National Liberation Front (FLN) government felt it had little choice but to open its one-party system to elections. An Islamist party calling itself the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) emerged as the FLN's primary political competitor. Despite containing radical elements, the FIS's moderate wing accepted participation in the electoral process and soon took command of the party. On the strength of its moderate stance and widespread discontent with the FLN, the FIS secured major successes in the municipal and legislative elections of 1990-91. On the eve of another round of FIS gains in 1992, the nascent Algerian democratic system imploded. In what a Council on Foreign Relations scholar has called "one of the greatest miscalculations in modern Algerian history," an Algerian military fearful of FIS victory abolished the liberal experiment and took power.[128] The coup resulted in a bloody 10-year civil war, pitting various insurgent coalitions

against the repressive army-led government and each other. Before its conclusion in 2002, upwards of 100,000 Algerians would perish.[129]

Disgusted with the FIS's perceived moderation, a more extreme Islamist insurgency—the Armed Islamic Group (GIA)—formed to battle the Algerian government in late 1991.[130] Many of the GIA's members had been radicalized in Afghanistan fighting the Soviet Union, and several had contact with Osama bin Laden.[131] By the mid-1990s, GIA actions had begun to spiral into nihilism. The group charged the entire Islamic population of Algeria with apostasy, and began killing hundreds of civilians at a time in planned massacres.[132] The GSPC emerged from within the largely discredited GIA in 1999, promising to carry on the Islamic jihad against the Algerian state without the wanton civilian attacks of its predecessor.[133]

From its first days, internal power struggles and weakness have defined the GSPC and its relationship to al-Qaeda. In Western press conferences and media reports, the GSPC is presented as a monolithic entity, slowly enlarging its power and reach. Much to the contrary, the group has for many years been wracked with internal division and internecine warfare. As noted above, the group's first commander, Hassan Hattab, sought to distance himself from bin Laden's global struggle, and instead concentrate the GSPC's energy on Algeria. Not only was bin Laden a divisive figure within the GSPC, Hattab has since noted in interviews, but he also backdated his involvement with the group once it achieved notoriety.[134]

Hardline factions in the GSPC, it is now clear, overstated their links to al-Qaeda in order to overcome Hattab's conciliatory line, attract desperately needed financial resources, and avoid losing membership

to the Algerian government's increasingly effective counterterrorism and amnesty initiatives.[135] By the time of El Para's much celebrated hostage-taking in the summer of 2003, these hardliners had ousted Hattab, installing in his place a brutal former GIA leader named Nabil Sahrawi. Sahrawi immediately reoriented the GSPC toward global jihadi rhetoric, stating soon after his assumption of power:

> Here we have evil America declaring a crusade and preparing the troops of the infidels to attack Islam everywhere. President Bush and many high officials clearly and loudly declared that this is a religious war under the banner of the cross. The goal of this war, which they called a "war on terrorism" and "war against evil" and other names, is to keep Islam and the Muslims from establishing the Country of Islam.[136]

Contrary to reports of "Terror in the Maghreb," the GSPC's turn toward pan-Islamist rhetoric was not made from a position of strength, but rather from weakness. Sahrawi's ascendancy transpired against a backdrop of devastating Algerian security raids and tightening finances, a state of affairs since noted in both civilian and U.S. military studies.[137] The GSPC had begun to loose popular support among the Algerian populace and had split into distinct northern and southern groups.[138] Sahrawi and his chief lieutenant would soon be hunted down and killed by Algerian security forces.[139] This was the context in which El Para, eager to evade capture and desperate for funds, launched his ill-fated kidnapping. Yet despite the GSPC's rhetorical turn toward the language of al-Qaeda, El Para soon made clear through his actions that the raid had little in common with standard al-Qaeda hostage-taking procedures. In contrast to the roughly contemporaneous

treatment of *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl, El Para's interest in his European captives focused exclusively on the euros they represented.[140] While there should be little doubt of El Para's intention to further the cause of jihad in Algeria—he was later reported to have purchased arms with the ransom money—his kidnapping operation was a fundraising event, not a pan-Islamist call to arms.

That, of course, is not how many U.S. analysts have regarded the attack. El Para was seen in the West as indicative of the GSPC's growing regional strength. Fellow southern GSPC commander Mokhtar Belmokhtar's 2005 raid on a military outpost in Mauritania seemed to support such an analysis. Yet as with the hostage-taking, details surrounding Belmokhtar's attack are as likely to indicate a struggling, fractured GSPC as a powerful new al-Qaeda ally. Belmokhtar is as much bandit as he is jihadi. His faction of the GSPC has been described as "more like a criminal organization than a committed terrorist group."[141] In his own account of the Mauritanian raid, Belmokhtar indicates that his primary goal was material. He proudly lists his haul: a mortar, an anti-aircraft cannon, 58 Kalashnikovs, 2 rocket propelled grenade launchers, 50,000 rounds of ammunition, and 7 Toyota trucks.[142] As with El Para's raid, all of Belmokhtar's hostages— this time 30—were later released.[143] Belmokhtar himself has since been marginalized; he is alternately reported as having been killed by Malian Tauregs, or in amnesty negotiations with Algiers.[144]

Immediately following Belmokhtar's raid, a SOCEUR spokesman labeled the GSPC the number one threat to the Sahel region.[145] The attack, said the spokesman, "was a clear sign 'they've become more active'."[146] Similar statements and references to the

region's "ungoverned spaces" have dominated U.S. Government discourse on policy in the Sahel. Data, however, dispute both these claims.

Beginning with the military putsch in 1992, Islamist attacks in Algeria follow a sharp bell-shaped curve.[147] The country experienced 76 insurgent attacks in 1992, a figure that would steadily rise to a peak of 311 in 1995, at the height of GIA atrocity. From that point onwards, however, Algeria has experienced ever-lower rates of Islamist attacks. By 1997, the figure stood at 127. By 2001, reflecting the GSPC's existential crisis, it was 20. In a decade-long insurgency that cost 100,000 lives, the U.S. State Department reported that the total number of terrorist, civilian, and security force deaths in Algeria in 2006 had declined to 323.[148] This figure followed totals of 488 deaths in 2005, 429 in 2004, and 1,162 in 2003.

Furthermore, the GSPC's two transnational attacks in the Sahel's "ungoverned spaces"—El Para's hostage taking of 2003 and Belmokhtar's attack of 2005—are most correctly viewed as isolated events spurred by desperation. In a 2006 paper undertaken at the Naval Postgraduate School, researchers conducted a quantitative study of all GSPC operations since the group's founding. Their results suggest an assessment at odds with U.S. policy:

> [The] GSPC, as it is currently (based on their operations), does not appear to be a "terrorist" group as much as an internal insurgency against the government, one that is trying to stay alive through shakedowns, roadblocks, and incursions to raise cash and other resources.[149]

In response to the "ungoverned spaces" thesis manifest in OEF-TS, the researchers noted that:

> The results were partially inconclusive. While *the data did invalidate the assumption that the operations occurred in*

regions consistent with the Sahel, [italics inserted] the data was not precise enough to determine how far individual operations were from areas of strong government control. The data did show that operations occurred primarily in the northern, more populously dense region [along the Mediterranean coast].[150]

On the GSPC's networks outside of Africa, the data indicated that:

[The] GSPC's international impact has been relatively small and has been limited to infrequent resource generating operations leading to arrests of GSPC and al-Qaeda members and diaspora affiliates in a number of European and Middle Eastern countries.[151]

This last passage refers to another oft-cited element of the GSPC's perceived growth: its ties to jihadi networks in Europe. Recent raids in Britain, Spain, France, and Italy demonstrate that GSPC-associated individuals are active across Europe.[152] Yet history suggests that the GSPC's links across the Mediterranean, while dangerous, do not indicate an expanding threat. In the mid-1990s, GIA-linked North Africans in Europe conducted a wave of bombings that killed and wounded scores in France.[153] Explosions rocked the Parisian Metro line and a bomb near Lyon unsuccessfully attempted to derail a high-speed train.[154] By the end of 1996, GIA-related attacks in France grew so severe that the military was called upon to conduct bomb patrols.[155] Additional underground Islamist cells existed in Stockholm, London, and Nice.[156]

Today, ties between GSPC members in Africa and Europe are based primarily on fundraising, logistics, communications, and propaganda.[157] Effective law enforcement has achieved notable successes in curtailing many of these activities. Since its inception,

and in contrast to the GIA of the 1990s, the GSPC has thus far achieved no attacks in Europe.

The GSPC and the GWOT.

By 9/11, Osama bin Laden had begun to reshape the GSPC insurgency into its current pan-Islamist form. For their part, the GSPC's leaders proved receptive to this strategy. Riven with factionalism, unpopular with the Algerian populace, short on finances, and threatened with extinction, a rhetorical turn to global jihad made strategic sense. No matter that operations remained focused almost exclusively on the Algerian government—pledging *bayat* to bin Laden thrust the once-marginalized group into the headlines.

This strategy of aggregation has been helped immeasurably by U.S. policy under the GWOT. Instead of diminishing the GSPC's importance in Africa, ubiquitous references to its expansion fuel bin Laden's designs. The GSPC's internal fissures and its inconsistencies in rhetoric and action are ignored by many western analysts, not broadcast to a receptive African audience. Bin Laden's chosen designation—al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb—is now the accepted form of reference to a group that until recently had only marginal ties to al-Qaeda. Far from portraying the GSPC as a serious but relatively isolated aspect of North African security, U.S. policies contribute to maintaining the group's relevance.

CASE STUDY: SOMALIA, AL QAEDA, AND CJTF-HOA

In late December 2006 and early January 2007, the Ethiopian army swept into Somalia in one of the most lopsided military engagements in recent

history. In their wake, Ethiopian troops killed and dispersed hundreds of Islamist fighters aligned with Somalia's ruling Islamic Courts Union (ICU).[158] The ICU had come to power in Mogadishu only 6 months previously. Though unabashedly Islamist, the Courts had been generally well-regarded by Mogadishu's notably nonfundamentalist population. After 15 years of near-constant violence, the group brought a much needed respite to the war-torn capital. The ICU's main governmental competitor and Somalia's internationally acknowledged sovereign, the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), had lacked the legitimacy and broad-based support to contest the ICU's rise. The TFG did, however, have Ethiopia's staunch backing and the good sense to position itself as a secular, "anti-terrorist" organization. On the strength of Ethiopian might and with support from the U.S. military, the TFG replaced the ICU in Mogadishu just days after the initial invasion.

Somalia's forced regime change occurred through an alignment of U.S. and Ethiopian strategic imperatives. Addis Ababa saw the ICU as a regional threat. In addition to its radical Islamist rhetoric and ties to terrorism, the Courts had supported rebels within Ethiopia, had a stated desire to reclaim Ethiopia's Ogaden region for Somalia, and had received support from Ethiopia's Eritrean enemy to the north.[159] All of these goals are anathema to Addis Ababa, which, as a regional power, seeks a friendly Somali government unwilling to challenge its own ethnic Somali possessions. Barring this unlikely outcome, it will settle for a fractured, weak, or nonexistent Somali regime. Before the meteoric rise of the ICU, Ethiopia had largely achieved this secondary aim. As long as Somalia's Islamists battled for control of the country with various clan leaders

and warlords, Ethiopian interests were secure. An ICU firmly in power and friendly with Eritrea and ethnic Somalis in the Ogaden, however, threatened Ethiopian security on numerous levels.

U.S. policy in the Horn of late has not mirrored Ethiopian *realpolitik* so much as it has been exclusively dictated by the GWOT. The ICU's head, Sheik Hassan Dahir Aweys, is also known to have led Al Ittihad Al Islami (AIAI), a Somali militant Islamist group. Members of AIAI, in turn, had long-standing, if convoluted, links to al-Qaeda. In the run-up to the December invasion, the ICU/AIAI partnership was suspected of harboring hundreds of foreign jihadis. Included in this number was Fazul Abdullah Mohammed, the Comoros Island native reportedly behind the 1998 Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania.[160] In its drive to kill or capture al-Qaeda leaders like Mohammed, U.S. military forces trained elements of the Ethiopian military, supported the invasion with intelligence and ground-based SOF advisors, and carried out air strikes on suspected al-Qaeda targets.[161] The Ethiopian invasion, it was hoped, would rid Somalia of its Islamist element while setting it on the path to stability.

Eight months after Ethiopia's sweeping victory, Mogadishu's streets are now as lawless as ever. Despite early optimism, many of Somalia's Islamists are now engaged in a vicious insurgency against the Ethiopian-backed TFG. The TFG, for its part, has been in no rush to settle events diplomatically. It has, however, fully adopted the language of the GWOT, declaring that, "The battle is clearly between terrorists linked to al-Qaeda and the government supported by Ethiopian and A.U. troops."[162] Meanwhile, the UN reports that 400,000 Somalis have had to flee their homes in the wake of post-invasion violence. A recent Human Rights Watch

report concludes that while atrocities have taken place on all sides, Ethiopian/TFG forces have conducted the worst abuses, including deliberate attacks on civilians.[163] Eritrea continues to sponsor the anti-TFG insurgency, threatening a return to full-scale war with Ethiopia. The last round of fighting between the two states, which concluded in 2000, killed hundreds of thousands.[164] Even once pro-TFG segments of Somalia's populace are enraged at the Ethiopian incursion and ensuing anarchy. U.S. support for Ethiopia, as well as rumors of collateral damage related to SOF air strikes, have renewed anti-American animus.[165] Elements of the global insurgency, from local Islamists in the Horn to Osama bin Laden, trumpet these events as one more example of the U.S. war on Islam. Finally, many of the high value individuals targeted by U.S. SOF in the initial invasion remain at large.[166]

Security in the Horn.

Nothing illustrates the contradictions of U.S. security policy in Africa better than operations in the Horn. CENTCOM's—soon to be AFRICOM's—Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa is the most visible U.S. endeavor in the region. CENTCOM established CJTF-HOA in late 2002 to disrupt the flow of jihadis from the Middle East to East Africa in the wake of the invasion of Afghanistan. It soon became clear, however, that the region encompassing the African states of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, and Sudan contained less of an al-Qaeda presence than once feared. Eager to maintain a presence in the volatile region, CENTOM quickly amended CJTF-HOA's mandate. The Task Force based at Djibouti's Camp Lemonier soon took on a role battling not jihadis, but the root causes thought to breed them.

CJTF-HOA seeks to achieve this goal through a two-pronged strategy. First, as with OEF-TS, it engages in military-to-military training of local forces.[167] These training sessions include aspects of basic military operations, border security, and counterterrorism. Second, it emphasizes civil-military operations and development initiatives. By virtually all accounts, this mission posture has achieved localized successes.[168] Results have been relatively small in number but impressive none the less. CJTF-HOA has built over 50 schools and nearly 30 clinics. It has dug dozens of wells for irrigation and drinking water, and has inoculated thousands of East Africans and their livestock against disease.[169] Its leaders and spokesmen are proud of their nonkinetic approach to counterinsurgency. As a former Task Force Commander noted in 2005, "we do not seek to engage enemy forces in combat; our 'maneuver elements' are doctors, veterinarians, civil engineers and well-drillers."[170]

Despite this assertion, CJTF-HOA's name is now inextricably linked to U.S. support of the Ethiopian assault. Open-source reports differ on the Task Force's level of support to SOF during the invasion.[171] Yet levels of veracity in such assertions hardly matter. CJTF-HOA has been indelibly linked to the invasion of Somalia now engulfing that territory in its latest conflagration. This connection has not been lost on the intended recipients of America's strategic communication.

As with recent operations in North Africa, the Somali incursion demonstrated a U.S. military posture preoccupied with short-term GWOT objectives. As in North Africa, this policy outcome was driven largely by a flawed analysis of local conditions in Somalia. Assumptions made under the GWOT led to an aggregation of local actors with the global insurgency. Aggregation, in turn, suggested that the use of kinetic

force was the most beneficial course of action for achieving U.S. interests. While short-term interests were indeed met—there can be little doubt that U.S./Ethiopian forces dispatched a large number of Somali militants—longer-term interests have suffered considerably in the fallout.

Somalia and the Failed State/Terrorism Nexus.

Much of U.S. strategic thinking related to Somalia focuses on its status as a failed state. Certainly no nation on earth is more deserving of the term. For more than 15 years, the jutting territory on Africa's eastern edge has been mired in a state of civil war and widening anarchy. Upon the withdrawal of American forces after the disastrous "Black Hawk Down" attack of October 1993, the United States seldom involved itself in the country's downward spiral. That position changed dramatically after 9/11, as GWOT policy came to focus on links between failed states and transnational terrorism. Such thinking was codified in *The 2002 National Security Strategy of the United States*, which warned that, "America is now threatened less by conquering states than we are by failing ones."[172] Somalia, as the ultimate example of state failure, seemed to provide the ultimate safe haven.

Such thinking provided the original rationale for CJTF-HOA in 2002. It also led to U.S. Government involvement in recent years with various Somali warlords eager to trade "terrorists" for cash.[173] Banding together under the title "Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counterterrorism," this group of U.S.-backed warlords attempted to gain control of Mogadishu in June 2006. The bid for power proved disastrous. Backlash from the takeover attempt directly

strengthened the ICU, which shortly consolidated its hold on Mogadishu and precipitated the current crisis.[174]

Though the failed state/terrorism nexus has guided U.S. action in Somalia in recent years, increasing evidence contests the theory's very basis. Both academic and government-affiliated studies suggest that failed state environments like Somalia are, in fact, less conducive to transnational terrorism than environments with some amount of governmental control. Horn specialist Kenneth Menkhaus has noted that post-9/11 fears of al-Qaeda bases in Somalia were unfounded.[175] Claims that AIAI operated as an al-Qaeda subsidiary—based largely on Ethiopian intelligence reports—were also dispelled. Though individual Somalia-linked al-Qaeda members have carried out attacks in East Africa—most notably the 1998 Embassy bombings—the territory never realized its mantle as an ideal safe haven. Similar conclusions have been reached by Naval Postgraduate School academics Anna Simons and David Tucker, as well as Naval War College professor Jonathan Stevenson.[176] In all cases, these scholars contend that failed states are no more hospitable to terrorists than they are to any other potential inhabitant. They tend to produce citizens ill-equipped to lead or even function as a part of the worldwide jihad. They are dangerous and often require an in-depth knowledge of shifting political alliances to ensure personal survival. And they lack the basic infrastructure and logistical support necessary for planning and/or carrying out attacks.

In the case of Somalia, the greatest challenge to the failed state/terrorism nexus comes from a recent report produced by the Combating Terrorism Center (CTC) at West Point.[177] Based on an exhaustive examination of al-Qaeda actions and correspondence since the early

1990s, CTC's authors conclude that the group has had no more success in taming the Somali environment than has any other outside body. Too often, the report notes:

> In Somalia, al-Qa'ida's members fell victim to many of the same challenges that plague Western interventions in the Horn. They were prone to extortion and betrayal, found themselves trapped in the middle of incomprehensible (to them) clan conflicts, faced suspicion from the indigenous population, had to overcome significant logistical constraints and were subject to the constant risk of Western military interdiction. In the past, al-Qa'ida has sought to draw the U.S. into entanglements where it can bleed the U.S.'s military economic resources. In Somalia, al-Qa'ida encountered an entanglement of its own.[178]

Echoing a disaggregation strategy, the report recommends four policy principles to guide counter-terrorism policy vis-à-vis Somalia:

> (1) prevent the creation of a Somali state based on jihadi ideology, in part by leveraging the divisions between Somalis and foreign jihadis; (2) selectively empower local authority structures; (3) publicize the elitist nature of al-Qa'ida fighters and their disrespect for Somalis; (4) maintain the capacity to interdict high value al-Qa'ida targets and provide humanitarian support, but minimize foreign military presence.[179]

The CTC report postdates the 2006-07 intervention in Somalia. Yet its policy prescriptions suggest that alternative courses of action were available to the U.S. Government prior to supporting the invasion. Little was known about the ICU when it first came to power. U.S. counterterrorism officials knew of the presence of "a half-dozen or less" al-Qaeda leaders wanted

in connection with the 1998 and 2002 bombings in Kenya and Tanzania.[180] Yet these same officials were unsure of the relationship between al-Qaeda and the courts. Accordingly, both the United States and ICU struck conciliatory tones in mid-2006.[181] Initial U.S. and international efforts focused on strengthening moderate Islamists within the ICU. The goal was to integrate the courts into the internationally-recognized TFG. The diplomatic approach quickly unraveled, however.

Assessing causality in this process is nearly impossible. One can only speculate whether hardliners would have come to power in the courts irrespective of U.S. policy. In-depth reports by the International Crisis Group indicate that the courts were at least initially characterized by in-fighting rather by cooperation. As the ICU gained influence and territory during the fall of 2006, it is difficult to imagine an attenuation in internal tension between the confederation's moderates and hardliners.

Nevertheless, by mid-December the United States had significantly altered its position to match the ICU's increased bellicosity. Instead of disaggregating militants from moderates and global jihadis from local Islamists, officials declared that the ICU and al-Qaeda were one and the same.[182] This message, along with the Ethiopian incursion that followed shortly thereafter, played directly into the hands of global jihadi leaders. Shortly after the invasion, Ayman al-Zawahiri issued an audio message entitled "Set Out and Support Your Brothers in Somalia." In it, the al-Qaeda leader exhorts African Muslims to initiate jihad in Somalia, "this new battlefield of the Crusaders' war, which is launched by America, its allies, and the United Nations against Islam and Muslims."[183]

CONCLUSION

The case studies of recent events and DoD efforts in North Africa and the Horn are not identical, but they do share similarities. Both illustrate a U.S. strategy of aggregating regional actors with al-Qaeda's global insurgency. In the Sahel, U.S. actions under the GWOT have bolstered a GSPC strategy designed to ensure its continued relevance. In Somalia, an initial U.S. Government policy to fracture a diverse and potentially exploitable Islamist movement was ultimately abandoned to concentrate on individual al-Qaeda operatives. Both efforts relied on the application of kinetic force, often through the use of proxies. This strategy has met with mixed results in the Sahel, and with relative failure in Ethiopia and Somalia. Both have also relied on adherence to the theory that ungoverned spaces and failed states provide ideal terrorist safehavens. Yet empirical evidence suggests that transnational terrorist inroads in the Sahel and Somalia are modest at best. Furthermore, both cases demonstrate that efforts to enforce U.S. standards of governance may result in significant second-order effects. In the final analysis, such externalities may be acceptable in light of the benefits reaped by offensive counterterrorism operations. Yet the cases of Somalia and the Sahel largely do not support such a conclusion.

Most significantly, recent U.S. Government actions in North and East Africa illustrate a policy emphasis contradictory to AFRICOM's stated design. In part, this contradiction suggests a difference in counterterrorism strategy undertaken by conventional and special operations elements within DoD. More broadly, it highlights a U.S. security establishment still grappling with the application of force in the post-9/11

environment. No matter the reason, inconsistencies in U.S. security policy in Africa are not lost on African leaders and influential opinion-makers. In no small part due to the war in Iraq, African leaders are increasingly fearful of the United States abandoning balanced civil-military initiatives to shorter-term, strictly military solutions. AFRICOM officials have done an impressive job of allaying such fears through public pronouncements and consultations with African leaders. Only through its future actions, however, will AFRICOM demonstrate responsiveness to African perceptions of African security threats. Luckily, the stand-up of the command is an opportune time to establish new operational priorities and fine-tune preexisting policies.

Since Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni's declaration of a "decade of awakening" in 1997, Africans have shown an increasing commitment to regional economic and military cooperation.[184] The growing depth and reach of the African Union (AU) and various African Regional Economic Communities (RECs) demonstrates a renewed commitment to breaking free of the continent's history of violence and poverty.[185] The nascent African Standby Force, with its five REC-affiliated brigades, offers a promising milestone toward achieving "African solutions to African problems" in the security realm.

The United States, through AFRICOM, can play a productive role in bringing about this vision of a more peaceful, plentiful Africa. The attention and resources garnered by a flag officer and full-time staff will benefit a continent heretofore prioritized by no one. AFRICOM's goals of building partnership capacity at the state, REC, and AU levels can bring much-needed support to African peacekeeping and peace-enforcement

operations. AFRICOM, in close coordination with the State Department, should work to expand the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program, which provides "train-the-trainer" peacekeeping support to the AU. Such an expansion would ideally include increased attendance by African military units, but should also incorporate the training of civilians in aspects of contingency operations related to health, natural disaster response, and humanitarian aid.

Additionally, through various Theater Security Cooperation and Security Assistance initiatives, AFRICOM has the opportunity to reorient many African militaries away from internal regime security and toward external defense. This process should build on preexisting efforts to inculcate military professionalism and Western notions of civil-military relations in partnering African states. Bringing senior African military leaders to American staff and war colleges for professional military education pays large dividends in this regard on relatively low-cost investments. Enlarging the scope of opportunity for uniformed and civilian African leaders to attend International Military Education and Training (IMET) programs and the Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS) should rate highly on AFRICOM's priority list.

Finally, AFRICOM should prioritize efforts to train a knowledgeable cadre of uniformed American service members intimately familiar with Africa, its people, customs, languages, cultures, religions, and security aspects. This process will take time. It will also require a commitment from DoD to integrate assigned AFRICOM staff into the local environment, and to support AFRICOM assignments with career advancement incentives.

Achieving all of these goals requires AFRICOM to be responsive to African perceptions of the local security environment. With a few notable exceptions, the GWOT does not rank high on the list of African security priorities. In its desire to find and combat terrorism in Africa, DoD has nonetheless oriented its major regional initiatives in North and East Africa along counterterrorism lines. The ramifications of this incongruity would be minor, were it not for the way in which the GWOT in Africa has thus far been pursued. A majority of operations have been positive, long-term efforts to improve capacity and increase standards of living. Yet a continued overreliance on short-term, kinetic solutions has largely undercut such initiatives. Combined with a strategy of aggregating local insurgencies into the GWOT, the effects of such policies have harmed U.S. strategic interests and destabilized regions of the continent. Elements of the global jihadi insurgency are present in several African regions, and AFRICOM should consider the mitigation of these elements one of its primary goals. Yet this will best be accomplished through partnering with African nations—on African terms—in matters of intelligence sharing, law enforcement, military cooperation, and through countering the conditions that breed disaffection. This worthwhile outcome will be made more difficult if AFRICOM adopts its predecessors' policies of sporadic military strikes embedded in a larger construct of humanitarianism and capacity building.

ENDNOTES

1. Walter L. Sharp, Briefing with Ryan Henry, Principal Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Policy and Army Lieutenant General Walter L. Sharp, Director, Joint Staff, Department of

Defense News Transcript, February 7, 2007.

2. The doctrinal definitions of the terms "kinetic" and "nonkinetic," as well as their relationship to the terms "lethal" and "nonlethal," remain a matter of some confusion and debate. For the purposes of this paper, "kinetic" operations are understood to involve offensive military actions including, but not limited to, the use of lethal force.

3. J. Peter Pham, "Africa Command: A Historic Opportunity for Enhanced Engagement—If Done Right," Testimony Before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, August 2, 2007.

4. See Richard Catoire, "A CINC for Sub-Saharan Africa? Rethinking the Unified Command Plan," *Parameters*, Vol. 30, No. 4, Winter 2000-01, pp. 102-17; *United States Security Strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa*, Washington, DC: Department of Defense Office of International Security Affairs, August 1995, p. 3, cited in Dan Henk and Steven Metz, *The United States and the Transformation of African Security: The African Crisis Response Initiative and Beyond*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 1997, p. 11.

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6. Ian Fisher, "Africans Ask if Washington's Sun Will Shine on Them," *New York Times*, February 8, 2001, p. A3, quoted in Peter J. Schraeder, "'Forget the Rhetoric and Boost the Geopolitics': Emerging Trends in the Bush Administration's Policy Towards Africa, 2001," *African Affairs*, Vol. 100, No. 400, 2001, pp. 387-404.

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8. Lauren Ploch, "Africa Command: U.S. Strategic Interests and the Role of the U.S. Military in Africa," Congressional Research Service, Report for Congress, May 16, 2007, summary.

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11. Wafula Okumu, "Africa Command: Opportunity for Enhanced Engagement or the Militarization of U.S-Africa Relations?" Testimony Before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, August 2, 2007.

12. Ploch, "Africa Command: U.S. Strategic Interests and the Role of the U.S. Military in Africa."

13. J. Peter Pham, "Africa Command: A Historic Opportunity for Enhanced Engagement—If Done Right," Testimony Before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, August 2, 2007.

14. Danna Harman, "China Takes Up Civic Work in Africa," *Christian Science Monitor*, Vol. 99, Issue 148, June 27, 2007, pp. 1-13.

15. See Pham, ""Africa Command: A Historic Opportunity for Enhanced Engagement—If Done Right"; Council on Foreign Relations, "More Than Humanitarianism: A Strategic Approach to Toward Africa," Princeton N. Lyman and J. Stephen Morrison, Project Directors, Independent Task Force Report No. 56, 2006, p. 5.

16. Princeton N. Lyman and J. Stephen Morrison, "The Terrorist Threat in Africa," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 83, Issue 1, January/ February 2004; pp. 75-86; Thomas Dempsey, *Counterterrorism in African Failed States: Challenges and Potential Solutions*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2006.

17. Charlie Coon, "AFRICOM to Depart from J-code Structure," *Stars and Stripes*, August 12, 2007.

18. Ryan Henry, Briefing at the State Department Foreign Press Center, Department of Defense Public Affairs News Transcript, June 22, 2007.

19. Sharp, Briefing with Henry and Sharp.

20. Ryan Henry, Briefing with Ryan Henry, Principal Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Policy and Army Lieutenant General Walter L. Sharp, Director, Joint Staff, Department of Defense News Transcript, February 7, 2007.

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22. Michael E. Hess, Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance, U.S. Agency for International Development, Testimony Before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, August 2, 2007.

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26. The only African head of state to emerge to date as a public champion of AFRICOM has been Liberian president Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. See Johnson-Sirleaf, "Africa: Africom Can Help Governments Willing to Help Themselves," *allAfrica.com*, guest column, June 25, 2007, available online at *allafrica.com/stories/200706251196.html*.

27. See, for example, General Bantz Craddock, Statement Before the Senate Armed Services Committee, May 17, 2007, p. 38.

28. Henry, Briefing Henry and Sharp.

29. See, for example, Whelan, Testimony Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Subcommittee on African Affairs, August 1, 2007.

30. Theresa Whelan, "U.S. to Establish New U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM)," Foreign Press Center Briefing with Theresa Whelan, U.S. Department of State Washington Foreign Press Center, February 9, 2007. The draft mission statement presented at the same briefing reads:

> US Africa Command promotes US National Security objectives by working with African states and regional organizations to help strengthen stability and security in the AOR. US Africa Command leads the in-theater DoD response to support other USG agencies in implementing USG security policies and strategies. In concert with other US government and international partners, US Africa Command conducts theater security cooperation activities to assist in building security capacity and improve accountable governance. As directed, US Africa Command conducts military operations to deter aggression and respond to crises.

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35. CJTF-HOA mission statement quoted from Ploch, "Africa Command: U.S. Strategic Interests and the Role of the U.S. Military in Africa," p. 16.

36. Ploch, "Africa Command: U.S. Strategic Interests and the Role of the U.S. Military in Africa," p. 17.

37. See "News Briefing with Maj. Gen. Timothy Ghormley," U.S. Department of Defense, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, September 21, 2005, available online at *www.defenselink.mil/utility/printitem.aspx?print=www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=2566*.

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39. See, for example, General Bantz Craddock, Statement Before the Senate Armed Services Committee, May 17, 2007, pp. 9-10; General John Abazaid, Statement Before the Senate Armed Services Committee, March 16, 2006, pp. 3-4, 32-33.

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41. *Ibid.*, (L), p. 1.

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